

AOA'S RESPONSE TO GLOBAL AGING



Challenges of Global Aging

The United States is one of many nations faced with profound challenges associated with dramatic increases in the numbers of people living to an advanced old age. This 20th Century phenomenon can be attributed to reductions in infant and maternal mortality, infectious and parasitic diseases, occupation safety measures, and improvements in nutrition and education.

"The number of persons age 60 or older is estimated to be nearly 600 million in 1999, and is projected to grow to almost 2 billion by 2050, at which time the population of older persons will be larger than the population of children (0-14) for the first time in human history. (UN Population Division, Dept. Of Economic and Social Affairs, 1999)

Administration on Aging International Activities

As the federal focal point for older Americans, the Administration on Aging (AoA) plays a vital role in familiarizing representatives from other nations with American aging programs. The AoA responds to requests for information from international organizations such as the United Nations, foreign governments, and agencies and hosts international scholars, officials and practitioners who come to the United States to learn firsthand about America's response to population aging. The AoA participates in a number of collaborative efforts with other countries and with international organizations, such as the World Health Organization, to enhance aging programs and policies worldwide. The AoA has a signed agreement with the China National Committee on Ageing of the People's Republic of China to share information and to develop collaborative activities.

The U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission

The AoA is especially committed to working with neighboring countries. In 1996, a Health Working Group was established under the auspices of the U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission, which promotes exchanges at the Cabinet level on a wide range of issues critical to U.S.-Mexico relations. The Aging Core Group, led in the U.S. by the Assistant Secretary for Aging, is one of five areas of collaboration between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Mexican Ministry of Health.

Ongoing exchanges of information, shared training and technical assistance will help both countries to better address the special health needs of older people. Specific areas of collaboration include:

- Models of care for the elderly;
- Nutrition and the elderly; and
- Prevention and control of chronic disease in the elderly.



Administration on Aging

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services / Administration on Aging / 200 Independence Avenue, SW / Washington, DC 20201

***AoA/Sister Cities
International
Partnership***

Linking local communities is one of the best ways to share knowledge, experience and know-how to meet the needs of older persons. The AoA and Sister Cities International (SCI) partnership benefits from the extensive experience of the Aging Network. The AoA and SCI partnership brings together the extensive experience of the aging network in serving the elderly and SCI's experience in linking some 2,000 U.S. cities, counties, and states with similar jurisdictions worldwide to increase global cooperation at the municipal level and to stimulate local community development."

A number of sister city efforts are being conducted along the U.S./Mexico border. These involve exchanges of professionals in the fields of aging and youth for the provision of services to older people. El Paso, Texas, Phoenix, Arizona, and Las Cruces, New Mexico continue to share resources, expertise, and services with their counterpart cities in Mexico.

Similar partnerships link the Iowa and Maryland Sister State Aging Consortiums with their counterparts in Yamanashi and Kanagawa Prefectures, Japan, respectively. Their goals are to learn more about each other's aging populations and programs.

***International Year
of Older Persons:
A Society for All
Ages***

In 1999, worldwide attention was focused on the global aging population as countries observed the United Nations-designated International Year of Older Persons (IYOP). The AoA served as the federal focal point for the IYOP and as a clearinghouse for information about the IYOP. The Assistant Secretary for Aging chaired the Federal Committee for the IYOP, which initiated interagency activities to observe the IYOP. This committee, consisting of over 40 federal agencies and departments, will continue its work beyond 1999 to develop viable, collaborative federal initiatives to meet the needs of older people.

Working in close partnership with its sister agencies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the AoA provides leadership, technical assistance, and support to the national aging network of 57 State Units on Aging, 655 Area Agencies on Aging, 225 Tribal and Native organizations representing 300 American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal organizations, and two organizations serving Native Hawaiians, plus thousands of service providers, adult care centers, caregivers, and volunteers. For more information about the AoA, please contact:

**Administration on Aging
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, DC 20201
Web site: <http://www.aoa.gov>**

**Phone: (202) 619-0724
Fax: (202) 401-7620
Email: aoainfo@aoa.gov**

Eldercare Locator: 1-800-677-1116, Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET